



## PRESS RELEASE

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**Contact:**

Dr. Robert Luckett, Director  
Margaret Walker Center  
Jackson State University  
601-979-2055  
[robert.luckett@jsums.edu](mailto:robert.luckett@jsums.edu)

**For Immediate Release**

John W. Franklin to be  
keynote speaker for the 2012  
MLK Convocation at JSU  
and a recipient of the annual  
*For My People* Award.

Jackson, MS—The Margaret Walker Center at Jackson State University is pleased to announce that John W. Franklin, the Director of Partnerships and International Programs for the National Museum of African American History and Culture being built on the Mall in Washington, D.C., will be the keynote speaker for the 43<sup>rd</sup> Annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., Birthday Convocation at JSU.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture is the Smithsonian's 19<sup>th</sup> museum, and John W. Franklin has worked on African American, African and African Diaspora programs for the past 24 years at the Smithsonian. Initially, he served as researcher and French language interpreter for the Smithsonian's African Diaspora program of the 1976 Bicentennial Folklife Festival while living and teaching English in Dakar, Senegal.

Franklin developed symposia and seminars for the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies from 1987-1992, and at the Smithsonian's Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage, he curated Smithsonian Folklife Festival programs on the Bahamas (1994), Cape Verdean Culture (1995), Washington, D.C. (2000) and Mali (2003). Franklin served on the Maryland Commission on African American History and Culture from 1998 to 2008 and the board of the Reginald Lewis Maryland Museum of African American History and Culture from 2000 to 2009. He served on the Board of Governors of the Joint Center for Economic and Political Studies from 2003-2011, and he edited, *My Life and an Era: the Autobiography of Buck Colbert Franklin* with his father, John Hope Franklin.

MLK Convocation will be held at 10:00 a.m. on Friday, January 13, 2012, in the Rose E. McCoy Auditorium on the campus of Jackson State and will be immediately followed by the 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Isaac K. Byrd *For My People* Awards luncheon at 11:45 a.m. in the JSU Student Center Ballroom.

Along with Mr. Franklin, the Margaret Walker Center will honor Mrs. Dorothy Stewart, founder of Women for Progress, and the Honorable Mary Toles, founder of the Natchez Association for





the Preservation of Afro-American Culture, for their contributions to the public preservation of African-American history and culture with this annual award named Margaret Walker's classic poem, *For My People*. Past recipients include James Meredith, Unita Blackwell, Robert Clark, Lerone Bennett, Andrew Young, Jesse Mosley, and others.

Tickets for this year's *For My People* Awards luncheon can be purchased through the Margaret Walker Center for \$10 starting on January 3, 2012. For more information, visit the Center's website at [www.jsums.edu/margaretwalker](http://www.jsums.edu/margaretwalker) or contact the Center's staff at 601-979-2055 or [mwa@jsums.edu](mailto:mwa@jsums.edu).

